

of one year! "Amateur" next satisfies himself that, because Mr. Thomas does not deny the merit of certain great masters, therefore his only objection is to the money that they cost. It may appear hard to reconcile this assumption with the fact that more than a third of that gentleman's papers is taken up in advocating the theorem, that "art cannot be founded on art,"—a principle which he insists on for reasons unconnected with the economy of the question; but this "Amateur" seems to forget, although his letter is in refutation of it.

He next proceeds to consider the patronage bestowed on modern pictures in this country, and becomes slightly more consistent. From the fact of the "Distraint for Rent" of Sir David Wilkie having recently fetched 1,200*l.*, and a painting the work of an artist under the age of two-and twenty having been purchased for 400*l.*, he infers that patronage in this country is perfectly adequate to the production of any style of art that may most do honour to it. I should be sorry to deny that considerable sums are expended every year on pictures,—unless there were, I very much doubt that there would be artists to paint them,—but I would caution "Amateur" against hastily drawing inferences from facts the result of individual experience, and would advise him, if he wishes to arrive at the truth, to make inquiries respecting the amount of Government patronage bestowed yearly upon art in countries where, like France and Germany, historical painting flourishes, and then to compare it with the amount which, at a fair calculation, may appear to be expended on pictures in this country,—which, I maintain, would not, *altogether*, stand comparison with the Government patronage of the King of Bavaria. In France, the annual sum expended on the fine arts by the central Government has been for many years 40,000*l.*,—which, if added to municipal patronages, would more than double the sum. Would "Amateur" venture to continue the comparison? Does "Amateur" believe that if the money of the King of Bavaria had been expended on old paintings, that little country could now boast more than any other of a race of historical painters? Does he believe that if the 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.* given in premiums at Westminster Hall, had been laid out on a Correggio, it would have been attended with a like result? Does he think that if 30,000*l.*, which, within the last two months has been spent on old paintings at two sales, had been employed on the decoration of the many architectural works springing up around us, it would have been attended with no beneficial effect? Does he hold up to us the knowledge derived from experience, and would he deny it in this particular instance? Let him turn to the life of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and read the answer of that great man to those who told him that there were no artists capable of carrying out the works he proposed—"We have money enough to make them." Lorenzo was a merchant, but "Amateur" tells us that "commerce has but little affinity with the higher aspirations of art."

I cannot make use of many individual cases strongly illustrative of the impossibility of carrying on historical painting in this country, being debarred from that species of evidence, so I will hastily glance at two or three more of our opponent's inconsistencies. He regrets the trifling nature of modern works, and wishes for the importation of Tintoret's large painting, apparently that we may be induced to do the like, yet he confesses that he would not advocate the introduction of such works into churches, the very nature of which patronage gave birth to them! He next laments what he calls "the drawing-room taste for finikin pictures," as if one of Mr. Thomas's staunchest supporters. He grieves that an eminent artist should employ his time upon dogs, lions, and parrots, after having produced two such pictures as—"one would think he was going to mention a "Last Judgment" and a "Last Supper," but no—"The Shepherd's Grave" and "The Shepherd's Chief Mourner"—two dogs! We advert to this curious piece of logic without intending the least disrespect to the very popular artist in question.

Perhaps of all that "Amateur" has said which tends to strengthen Mr. Thomas's case,

there is nothing more striking than his lamentations over the decline of the taste for ancient art; this has been a fact known and understood for some time by every one awake to the rising taste for art in this country, and is alone sufficient to render unnecessary Mr. Thomas's efforts to hasten it, and unavailing his opponents to retard it.

I must now make a few remarks bearing on "Amateur's" taste and knowledge in matters of art. After assuring him that I have heard of such a name as Tintoret, I must inform him that it is not customary at this period to praise at one breath masters such as Fra Angelico, Perugino, and the Bellini; and then again, Tintoret, Guido, and the Caracci; it is not at present customary to express equal pleasure at the guileless inexperience of the one school and the pedantic incapacity of the other; neither is it common at this moment to hear historical painters mention Domenichino and the eclectic school as if their efforts were either to be admired or imitated; it is not prudent to make such a display about Tintoret merely because a graduate of Oxford has lately made a great fuss about him, while the men of most note throughout Europe show nothing but indifference towards him.

Opinions have altered, and become more matured since the days of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Diligent inquiry in London would show that there is no longer any fear of Fuseli being mistaken for a Michelangelo, and at Munich he might learn that Overbeck did not study Raffaele; that he was one of four young men who sought to attain a like perfection by following the footsteps of that great master and his contemporaries, for which purpose they reverted to his predecessors, because in their less sophisticated works they found a powerful antidote to the false taste and pseudo classical style then every where prevalent; when having accomplished this object, they abandoned the study of those imperfect though truthful masters, and have since relied solely on nature and the emulation derived from contemporary efforts: for a better explanation of which see "Hand Book for Painting in Italy," edited by Eastlake. If the Bavarian painters still borrow any thing from the Italian, it is merely the external characteristics which they consider belong by precedent to Christian art, which they are chiefly employed upon, not the artistic qualities; but as no one will affirm that there is any request for that style of art in this country, or that antidotes are required for bringing back a taste for nature, at least with the more popular artists, so is there even less necessity for the study of any old masters than in the Catholic countries where mysticism flourishes. "Amateur" quotes some lines from Sir Joshua advocating the study of the ancients: let me remark that the study of Raffaele and Michelangelo occasioned the Caracci to leave behind them the insipid trash that has been imported into this country, while the study of nature has produced within a few years a race of artists, if not the equals of the painters of the court of Leo X., at least their equals in many things, and often their superiors: need we turn the attention to names like Lessing, Cornelius, Sheffer, Ingre, yea, and even in our own country names that we may be proud of, only one of whom, McClise, ought to act like a talisman, in spite of his defects. France and Germany testify their admiration for the old masters, having full-sized copies made of those works which money will not buy, such as the Last Judgment and the Stanze of Raffaele, instead of importing doubtful Corregios and puddingy Guidos. I could, if required, point out a few defects among the Italian and Flemish pictures at the National Gallery; I could also point out some merits in Hogarth, who, in an age of the greatest mediocrity, studied nature unassisted. I can also revert to the trash exhibited this summer at the British Institution—but enough for the present.

In conclusion, I would add a few remarks on the third, and certainly the most startling maxim inculcated in Mr. Thomas's lectures—I mean that belief which he expresses, in the existence of rules to art which alone ought to be sufficient to it. Let me candidly state that I myself belong to the hair-brained and poetic race, that is but little disposed to submit to the shackles of self-constituted legislators, but I am not deaf to the promptings of reason

and common sense; and I aver it as my belief that there are certain comprehensive rules which we all feel and work by, although as yet undefined; we feel these rules become more circumscribed in measure as our aspirations become higher. I know by experience that from originality to eccentricity there is but one step, one step out of the ruled circle of perfection. I believe that Shakespeare himself is great from his beauties, and that his few defects are unallied to those beauties, and consist in his having sometimes overstepped, not the rules of Aristotle, but those unyielding yet invisible rules which encompass art whatever be its object; and, in conclusion, I will say that it is of rules to art as it was of medicine, they have been so long in the hands of quacks that mankind have despaired of finding any truth in them; yet, as in medicine, they are continually resorted to, and will one day be believed in; but first we must find some one with power of mind to define them. Mr. Thomas, in his lectures, has given good proof of ability. Let us hope that having thrown down the gauntlet, he will take it up again, and that he may eventually do something towards untying this "gordian knot."

AN ARTIST.

THE PRODUCTION OF CURVES.

THE SEPTENARY SYSTEM OF GENERATING CURVES.

QUOTING various remarks and reports which have appeared in *THE BUILDER* concerning the *entasis* of columns, and "the minute and beautiful curves which the refined minds of the Greek artists led them to substitute for the straight lines and circular forms with which the Egyptians, before them, and the Romans and their followers, after them, have been contented," Mr. Jopling has deposited in the Polytechnic Institution, Regent-street, some examples of *entasis* produced by his system*, and calls on architects generally, and ourselves in particular, to inspect them.

His object is, of course, to force on public attention the importance of the study of curves, with the secondary view (and the desire is quite legitimate) of seeing his system for producing varieties of these lines properly brought into use and carried out.

The inventor points out, in a sheet of letter-press which accompanies the curves, that "Willis's Principles of Mechanism" contains abundant evidence that neither the simplest principles for regulating motion, nor their results, *true lines*, are practically or obviously known either at Cambridge or in the path of his research." And further, with truth remarks, that "Every periodical in which forms of lines are alluded to, shows that a systematic extension of a practical knowledge, or an ocular acquaintance with true varying geometrical lines, or of their applications, forms no part of the instruction in schools of design, or in colleges for architects and engineers."

That such a course of study would be exceedingly valuable, we have already, on many occasions, asserted.

THE MONUMENTS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.—At the close of the last meeting of the British Archaeological Association, the alleged removal of some monuments in Westminster Abbey, by Mr. Blore, and which had furnished matter for severe remarks in the public journals, was brought forward. As doubt existed when the stone inscribed, "O rare Ben Jonson," and that which covered Cowley's grave, were taken away, the subject was referred to the consideration of the council, in order to afford time to procure information, and test the truth of the charges brought against Mr. Blore, the Dean of Westminster, &c.

* 1. Shaft of a column with flutes, to the scale of the model of the Parthenon, by Mr. Lucas, in the British Museum. Tangents to the curvature of each line at the base, are inclined to the axis, which, from Mr. Penrose's investigations, appears to be the case in that ancient structure. 2. The outside lines, extending the whole length of the drawing, rise perpendicularly from the base, with a curve constantly changing to the points of contrary flexure at the top. 3. A small example of the shaft of a column, to each line in which, tangents to the curvature at points on the base are perpendicular. 4. With the same character as last, to the scale of the model of the Parthenon. 5. The outside lines on this side of the drawing, based vertically from the axis at the base, and the greatest swell is at one-tenth of the height, from which the curvature ranges continually towards the top, when they terminate in points of contrary flexure.